NOTE VII.

ON THE COLLECTIONS OF BIRDS,

SENT BY THE LATE A. T. DEMERY FROM THE SULYMAH RIVER (W. AFRICA)

BY

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The collecting work of our much lamented african naturalist, Mr. A. T. Demery, having been abruptly stopped last year by his unexpected death (N. L. M. 1891, p. 248), it will be of no little importance to publish a list of the species of birds, obtained during his sojourn on the banks of the Sulymah River, the more as Demery is the first and hitherto the only collector who explored this part of the vast country between Grand Cape Mount and the Isle of Sherbro. His chief station was Juring, a native town on the left bank of the Sulymah River, about 10 miles off the sea-coast. From Juring he made several excursions, especially higher up the river, which latter is practicable for row-boats and canoes much farther inland than most of the rivers in Liberia. The whole country between the Mahfa River (Grand Cape Mount) and Sherbro is rather flat and seems to have about the same aspect as the country round the Fisherman Lake. High forest, interrupted by savannahs, extensive reed-jungles and large swamps cover the alluvial plain, which is crossed by the Mannah-[1]), the Sulymah- and the Gallinas River, and, especially in its western or northern part, by an immense net of mangrove-skirted creeks, while, a few mi-

1) The Mannah River is, since 1887, the actual frontier between Liberia and the British Colony of Sierra Leone.

les west from the Gallinas River, and not far inland from the coast, is situated the Palma Lake, covered, especially in its eastern part, with numerous islands, and forming a conveniant abode for swamp- and water-birds. As the oro- and hydrographical conditions of this territory are the same as in Liberia and there being no important difference in latitude, it is evident that their fauna will be principally the same. Amongst the few mammals sent by Demery from the Sulymah River, there was not one which had not been obtained in Liberia before and, with a few exceptions, the same is the case with the birds from that river, and even of these few exceptions it is by no means certain that they are really wanting in the ornis of Liberia.

The species, ten in number, which hitherto have not been found in Liberia, will be marked with an asterisk.

1. *Astur macroscelides* (Hartl.).
2. *Baza cuculoides* (Swains.).

An adult male with a very distinct chestnut cross-band on the hind neck, partially concealed under the elongated crest-feathers, and the longest of the rufous under wing-coverts barred with white.

This specimen is somewhat paler than the adult male I collected in Liberia and in which the under wing-coverts are uniform rufous, while the chestnut neck-band is entirely wanting. I believe the white bars on the under wing-coverts as well as the red neck-band to be the last remnants of the immature dress, these characteristical marks also being found in an immature female from the Gold Coast and two females of the South African form, known as *Baza verreauxi.*

The chief character, which distinguishes this latter form from *B. cuculoides*, is said to be the white-banded under wing-coverts, and these bands existing in our nearly adult West African male, will, therefore, loose a great deal of specific value, the more as the »adult" specimen of *Baza verreauxi*, figured in Sharpe's edition of Layard's Birds of

South Africa, shows some remains of longitudinal spots on the breast, which spots are undoubtedly a sign of immaturity. In our bird from the Sulymah River the cross-barring on breast and flanks is complete.

Unfortunately we do not possess an adult male from South Africa, and therefore I do not wish to make out whether, after all, Schlegel was correct or not in uniting both forms under the name of *Baza cuculoides*.

3. *Syrnium nuchale* (Sharpe).

An adult female. It differs from the adult male by its larger size and in having the white cross-bands on the under surface and the white spots on the upper wing-coverts much broader. Length of wing 24 cm., while in our adult male from Liberia it is only 21,7.

4. *Scotornis longicauda* (Drap.).

*5. *Macrodipteryx longipennis* (Shaw).

Adult male and female, shot in the Savannahs near Juring. The male has the two accessorial feathers between the primaries and secondaries not fully developed, the bare basal part of the shaft not reaching farther than the tips of the primaries. The vanes, about 15 cm. long, are entirely black on the under surface while the upper surface is broadly barred across with ashy gray. The rufous collar on the hind neck is very distinct and quills and tail-feathers are entirely destitute of any white markings, being regularly banded across with dark brown and rufous. Wing 16,7 cm., tail 10,5 cm. The female does not differ from the male in color, only the pair of long waving wing-feathers are wanting. Wing 16 cm., tail 10,4 cm. The two specimens in our Museum, one from the Senegal, the other from the Gold Coast, both with exceedingly long accessorial wing-feathers, have the vanes of the latter above and below entirely black, showing however, by careful examination, some faint traces of light cross-bars on the upper surface.

*6. *Psalidoprocne obscura*, Hartl.

An adult male, obtained on October 4th, is similar to

our Gold Coast-specimens, amongst which is the type of the species. This latter is not a fully adult specimen, its wings and tail are shorter than in the adult stage and the gloss on the upper surface is not as metallic green as in the adult. Wing 9,5 cm., outermost tail-feather 10 cm. Iris brown, bill and legs black.

7. *Eurystomus afer* (Lath.).
8. » *gularis*, Vieill.
9. *Halcyon malimbica* (Shaw).
10. *Ceryle maxima* (Pall.).
11. *Corythornis cyanostigma* (Rüpp.).
12. *Ispidina picta* (Bodd.).
13. » *leucogastra* (Fras.).
14. *Alcedo quadribrachys*, Bp.
15. *Merops superciliosus*, L.
16. » *erythropterus*, Gm.
17. » *gularis*, Shaw.
18. *Cinnyris cyanolaemus* (Jard.).
19. » *obscurus* (Jard.).
20. » *johannae*, Verr.
21. *Anthreptes hypodilus* (Jard.).
22. *Prinia mystacea*, Rüpp.
23. *Camaroptera concolor*, Hartl.
24. » *brevicaudata* (Cretzschm.).
25. *Hylia prasina* (Cass.).
26. *Cossypha poensis*, Strickl.
27. *Alethe diademata* (Bp.).
28. *Crateropus atripennis*, Swains.
29. *Xenocichla eximia* (Hartl.).
30. » *canicapilla* (Hartl.).
31. *Criniger barbatus* (Temm.).
32. » *verreauxi*, Sharpe.
33. » *simplex* (Hartl.).
34. » *leucopleurus* (Cass.).
35. » *indicator*, Verr.
36. *Chlorocichla gracilirostris* (Strickl.).
37. *Andropadus latirostris*, Strickl.

38. *Andropadus curvirostris*, Cass.
39. » *virens*, Cass.
40. *Pycnonotus barbatus* (Desf.).
41. *Acrocephalus turdoides* (Meyer).

Adult male and female, shot in high cane on February 28th and March 4th 1890. Both specimens are richly tinged with fulvous on the lower surface, still richer than our specimens in the early spring plumage. Nothing is known as yet about the arrival of these birds on the West-Coast in autumn and their departure in spring.

42. *Motacilla flava*, L.
43. *Anthus pyrrhonotus*, Vieill.
44. *Cassinia finschi*, Sharpe.
45. *Terpsiphone nigriceps* (Hartl.).
*46. *Pratincola rubetra* (L.).

An adult male, obtained March 3rd 1890, in splendid breeding plumage.

47. *Diaphorophyia castanea* (Fras.).
48. » *blissetti*, Sharpe.
49. *Bias musicus* (Vieill.).
50. *Dicrurus atripennis*, Swains.
51. » *modestus*, Hartl.
52. *Fraseria cinerascens* (Hartl.).
53. *Sigmodus caniceps*, Bp.
54. *Telephonus senegalus* (L.).
55. *Nicator chloris* (Less.).
*56. *Laniarius poliochlamys*, Gadow.

Several specimens. Iris white, bill black, feet bluish white.

57. *Chaunonotus sabinei*, J. E. Gray.
58. *Dryoscopus leucorhynchus* (Hartl.).

A male with white bill, collected March 10th 1890. Both the males collected at Robertsport and one of which was shot from a nest with eggs, have the bill entirely black. All three specimens are jet-black and seem to be fully adult.

59. *Oriolus brachyrhynchus*, Swains.
60. *Corvus scapulatus*, Daud.

61. *Lamprocolius cupreicauda*, Hartl.

62. *Pholidauges leucogaster* (Gm.).

63. *Malimbus rubricollis* (Swains.) [1]).

Sycobius rubricollis, Bütt. N. L. M. 1885, p. 195; 1886, p. 259.
Malimbus malimbicus, Bütt. N. L. M. 1888, p. 90; id. Reisebilder aus Liberia, II, p. 475.
Malimbus bartletti, Sharpe, Cat. Birds, Br. Mus. XIII, p. 479.

In his above mentioned catalogue, Dr. Sharpe separates, under the name of *M. bartletti*, the birds from Upper Guinea (Liberia to the Gold Coast) from those from Lower Guinea (Gaboon to Congo), which he considers to be the true *M. rubricollis*. The reason for this separation is said to be the difference in the tinge of red on crown and hind neck, which ought to be crimson in the true *M. rubricollis* from Lower Guinea, while it is scarlet or vermilion in the birds from Upper Guinea (*M. bartletti*). At the moment we possess only one specimen from Lower Guinea (Congo) which really has head and hind neck more crimson than those from Liberia and the Gold Coast, but the fact is that it also shows a remarkable tinge of vermilion and can, therefore, hardly be specifically separated from the birds from Upper Guinea.

64. *Malimbus malimbicus* (Daud.).

Sycobius cristatus (Vieill.). Bütt. N. L. M. 1885, p. 195.
Malimbus cristatus, Bütt. N. L. M. 1889, p. 124; id. Reisebilder aus Liberia, II, p. 475.

An adult and an immature male. The crest in the males from Liberia and the Sulymah River are constantly less developed than in our specimens from the Gold Coast, and much less so than in a specimen from Angola (probably erroneously for Loango).

In the genus *Malimbus*, and more than in any other in this present species, many questions about the distribution of the red color in connection with the sex and the

1) See the explanations about the much entangled synonymy of *Malimbus malimbicus* and *M. cristatus* in Sharpe, Catalogue of Birds Br. Mus. XIII, p. 478.

different stages of age are still unsettled. Dr. Hartlaub, in his „Ornithologie Westafrica's", says that in *M. malimbicus* (the *Sycobius cristatus* of his) the female resembles the male in the distribution of the red, but that the crest in the female is wanting and the bill flesh-color instead of black. This statement is adhered to by Prof. Bocage, quoting it without additional remarks in his „Ornithologie d'Angola."

Dr. Sharpe, however, in his Catalogue of Birds, Vol. XIII, p. 480, says that the female differs from the male in having the red color of the (uncrested) crown continued onto the hind neck, and that the throat is black, generally intermixed with some red feathers, while this part is bright crimson in the male.

On ground of the material before me (three skins from the Sulymah River, one from Liberia, eleven stuffed specimens from the Gold Coast and one from Lower Guinea) I cannot agree with Dr. Sharpe's opinion as developed above, and rather yield to that of Dr. Hartlaub's, brought forward in his Ornithologie Westafrica's. All our specimens from the Gold Coast are collected by the late Dutch Governor Nagtglas, and those which I consider to be adult are all well-sexed, while two of the other four are marked »avis jun." As the annotations made by Nagtglas have always proved to be very trustworthy, there is no reason to doubt their accuracy in this case. The fact now is that all the birds sexed as males, four in number (with inclusion of the specimen from Lower Guinea), have the throat, sides of face and the crested crown with the exception of the black frontal band and the black hind neck, red; and four specimens, all females, are precisely colored like the males, differing from the latter only by their want of a crest. Immature birds, and as such has the bird to be considered, described by Dr. Sharpe as the adult female, have the whole head, including the front, hind neck and sides of neck, red; throat and fore-neck are entirely black. In a more advanced stage the black throat becomes intermixed

with red feathers which gradually occupy the entire throat, leaving the chin black. In the meantime, i. e. after the throat has become almost entirely red, a different process is going on with the hind neck, where some black feathers begin to make their appearance, continually increasing in number until the whole hind neck has changed his originally red colour into black, and the same is the case on the fore-head, which later on becomes black in males and females. After the birds have assumed the plumage of the adult, or sometimes even before, the distinctive character of the male, the crest, begins to get its full length, while in the immature stage the males cannot be distinguished from the females. Amongst our specimens which I consider to be immature, i. e. not to have assumed the last stage of plumage, we have one with entirely black throat and but few red feathers on the chest, and other specimens represent the gradual change into the red throat of the adult.

If the above developed ideas prove, by further investigations, to be correct, a concise diagnosis of the species would be as follows:

Adult male: General color sooty black, some of the feathers, especially on the back, margined with a metallic gloss; base of fore-head, lores, circlet round the eye, angle of mouth and the chin also black; crested crown, sides of head, sides of fore-neck as well as the entire throat and upper chest, crimson.

Adult female: Similar to the male, but no occipital crest.

Immature male and female: Similar to the adult female, but the throat black instead of red, in more advanced stage intermixed with red feathers, the red of the crown continued foreward right down to the base of the bill, and backward onto the hind neck. The change of the color is performed by a complete moult.

65. *Malimbus nitens* (Gray).

A large series was collected, which contains a number

of specimens representing a very interesting transitional stage of plumage, analogous in its development to that described in the preceding species. The adult, males as well as females are easily recognized by the red lower throat and chest, while the rest of the plumage is sooty black, with broad glossy edgings to the feathers on the upper surface. One of these specimens, probably the youngest, has the whole chin, throat and chest, and also the centre of the crown entirely red, while the rest of the head is intermixed with red feathers. Another specimen has the chin already black, but still intermixed with red, while numbers of red feathers are found between the black plumage of the crown and the sides of the head, and some of the feathers on the breast are broadly tipped with brownish red. A third specimen, still nearer the adult stage, has the chin entirely black, but the black crown and sides of head show some sparsely distributed red feathers. The first specimen here described, with the entirely red chin and throat, has moreover a small spot of white feathers on the breast, and the same is the case, even in a much higher degree, with the fully adult specimen mentioned in my first paper on Liberian birds (N. L. M. 1885, p. 196).

The young bird is smoky brown with the shield on the chest dark fulvous, intermixed with young glossy red feathers, which also make their appearance on the head.

66. *Malimbus scutatus* (Cass.).

This species, easily distinguished from all its congeners by its scarlet under tail-coverts, is represented by a single specimen in that peculiar transitional stage of plumage, upon which Capt. Shelley, Ibis, 1887, p. 41, pl. II, based his *Malimbus rubropersonatus*, a species which afterwards is recognized as an immature specimen of *M. scutatus* and reunited with this latter by Dr. Sharpe in his Catalogue of Birds, Vol. XIII, p. 482. But while the above mentioned coloured plate of Capt. Shelley's does perfectly agree with one of our birds from the Gold Coast, the specimen from the Sulymah River, which is a female, has the red feathers

on the fore-head intermixed with black ones, the cheeks are already entirely black, as well as the sides of chin and throat, and it is evident that the red on chin, upper throat and the fore-head very soon would have given way to the black color, peculiar to the adult female of this species. (About the immature specimens from Liberia, see my remarks in N. L. M. 1885, p. 196). The bill in young birds is nearly white and through all the transitional stages becomes continually darker until it has got the black color of the adult stage.

The bird from the Cameroons, mentioned by Dr. Sharpe under the head of *M. scutatus* in his Catalogue, belongs certainly to this species. Although none of the specimens in our Museum have the red patch on the chest longitudinally divided by a black line, nearly all, and especially the immature ones, have the red patch more or less deeply notched from below, and this is, in a very high degree, the case with a fully adult specimen from the Gaboon.

67. *Hyphantornis aurantius* (Vieill.).

*68. » *superciliosus*, Shelley.

Two males, shot in the cane-jungles near Juring.

69. *Sitagra brachyptera* (Swains.).

Hyphantornis brachyptera, Bütt. N. L. M. 1885, p. 189.
Symplectes brachypterus, Bütt. N. L. M. 1886, p. 259.

A large series of these birds having been collected, the species seems to be very common on the Sulymah River, while at Robertsport and farther down the coast of Liberia it is rather rare.

70. *Pyromelana flammiceps* (Swains.).

*71. *Coliopasser ardens* (Bodd.), var. *concolor* (Cass.) [1]).

Ten male specimens, all belonging to the northern variety in which the red cross-band is entirely wanting. It

1) I cannot see sufficient reason for rejecting Rüppell's generic name of *Coliuspasser* in favor of *Penthetria* of Cabanis, on account of its unscholarly composition, as it can easily be altered, and has already been done so (N. L. M. 1889, p. 74 and J. f. O. 1889, p. 283) into *Coliopasser*. Corrections of such names are not rare in ornithological literature.

is on the authority of eminent Ornithologists as Cabanis and Shelley (see Sharpe, Cat. Birds Br. Mus. Vol. XIII, p. 227) that I consider my entirely black birds to be a variety of *C. ardens*, a variety which has been named *Vidua concolor* by Cassin. They have been killed in the cane-jungles near Juring during the months of September, October and November.

72. *Penthetriopsis macrura* (Gm.).

Penthetria macroura, Bütt. N. L. M. 1885, p. 197.
Coliuspasser macrourus, Bütt. N. L. M. 1886, p. 259; 1881, p. 91.
Coliopasser macrurus, Bütt. N. L. M. 1889, p. 134.

Numerous specimens, found in the same reed-jungles as the preceding species.

73. *Spermestes cucullata*, Swains.
74. *Nigrita emiliae*, Sharpe.
75. » *bicolor* (Hartl.).
76. *Corythaix macrorhynchus*, Fras.
*77. » *buffoni* (Vieill.).
*78. *Schizorrhis africana* (Lath.).
79. *Berenicornis leucolopha*, Sharpe.
80. *Tockus semifasciatus* (Temm.).
81. *Pogonorhynchus hirsutus* (Swains.).
82. *Trachyphonus goffini* (Schleg.).
83. *Mesopicus pyrrhogaster* (Malh.).
84. *Centropus leucogaster* (Leach) [1].

Centropus francisci, Bütt. N. L. M. 1885, p. 222; 1886, p. 264; 1888, p. 96; 1889, p. 135.

85. *Centropus senegalensis* (L.).
86. *Ceuthmochares aeneus* (Vieill.).
87. *Coccystes cafer* (Licht.).
88. *Chrysococcyx klaasi* (Steph.).
89. *Treron calva* (Temm.).
90. *Turtur semitorquatus* (Rüpp.).
91. *Peristera tympanistria* (Temm.).
92. *Vanellus inornatus*, Swains.

1) See Hargitt, Cat. Birds Br. Mus. Vol. XIX, p. 358.

93. *Charadrius forbesi* (Shelley).

An adult female, shot in an old plantation near Juring.

94. *Ardea atricapilla*, Afzel.

*95. *Ardeola ralloides*, Scop.

A nearly adult male, shot February 20th 1890 on the banks of the Sulymah River.

*96. *Fuligula fuligula* (L.).

An adult female, shot near the Sulymah River (no date mentioned).

Leyden Museum, January 1892.